

USE OF ACP SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS

Program participants choose when to use the substitute address. The participant is responsible for notifying state and local agencies that he or she is an ACP participant who wishes to use the ACP substitute address. When a program participant presents his or her authorization card, state and local government agencies must accept the ACP substitute address as though it were the person's actual residential address. When an ACP participant chooses to reveal his or her actual address, however, the state or local agency is not legally obligated to keep that information confidential.

In some situations, where a state or local agency has a *bona fide* statutory or administrative reason for obtaining a participant's actual address, the agency may petition the Office of the Attorney General for an exemption to the ACP statute. If the Office of the Attorney General grants the agency an ACP exemption, program participants involved with that agency may be required to reveal their actual addresses.

Participants will be required to provide their actual addresses when purchasing firearms from a gun dealership. Participants will also be required to provide their actual addresses to a law enforcement officer during the issuance of a traffic summons for a traffic violation, during a criminal investigation, or at the time of an arrest.

Private companies (such as banks, stores, credit card companies and utility companies) are not required to accept the substitute address; however, certain businesses may be willing to accept the ACP substitute address as the participant's mailing address for delivery of first-class mail.

DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS

The Office of the Attorney General will not disclose a participant's address unless directed to do so in a court order, or unless requested by a law enforcement agency for law enforcement purposes. Records are exempt from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Va. Code Ann. § 2.2-3700 et. seq.).

CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATION

Participants are certified for one year following the date of certification unless the participant withdraws from or is cancelled by the ACP before that date. A participant may voluntarily withdraw from the ACP at any time. The ACP may cancel a participant's certification in the following instances:

- If the participant obtains a name change;
- If the participant changes his/her address and does not notify the ACP within seven days;
- If mail forwarded to the participant is returned as non-deliverable;
- If the participant knowingly uses false information during the application process;
- If the one-year certification period has expired and the participant has not submitted a renewal form;
- If the participant is placed on parole or probation while in the ACP; or
- If the participant is required to register as a sex offender while in the ACP.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

A free, confidential mail-forwarding service for victims of domestic violence who have recently relocated to a location unknown to their abuser

For more information about the ACP, visit www.vaag.com and click on the "Key Issues" and "Domestic Violence" links.

FOR ACP QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:
Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)
P.O. Box 1133 • Richmond, Virginia 23218-1133
(804) 692-0952
mdickert@oag.state.va.us

Office of the Attorney General
Robert F. McDonnell
Attorney General

What is the Address Confidentiality Program?

INTRODUCTION

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) helps victims who have recently relocated to a new location unknown to their abusers keep their new addresses confidential. The ACP has three important components:

- The ACP provides participants with a legal substitute address which has no relation to their actual address.
- The ACP provides participants with a free, confidential mail-forwarding service.
- Through the ACP, the Office of the Attorney General acts as an agent for acceptance of service of legal process for participants.

A participant may use the substitute address as his or her legal address for purposes of receiving state and local services, and as his or her mailing address for first-class mail. The actual address of a participant is made available only to the Office of the Attorney General and its employees involved in the ACP and to law enforcement officers for law enforcement purposes.

The ACP limits public disclosure of a participant's actual address; however, the ACP is not retroactive and cannot provide absolute protection. Each ACP participant should seek counseling through a local domestic violence program to determine whether the ACP should be a part of the victim's overall safety plan.



ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

The ACP is intended to help victims of domestic violence, both adults and children, who have confidentially relocated to a location unknown by their abusers.

Participation in the ACP is currently limited to victims living in eighteen localities in Virginia: the Counties of Albemarle, Arlington, Augusta, Dickenson, Fairfax, Henry, Lee, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Washington, and Wise, and the Cities of Buena Vista, Charlottesville, Lexington, Martinsville, Norfolk, and Roanoke. Participation in the ACP is not transferable if a participant moves to another state.

Participation in the ACP is not permitted if the applicant is a sex offender required to register on the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry, or is on parole and/or probation.

An applicant who is a resident of temporary housing for thirty (30) days or less is not eligible to enroll in the ACP until he or she obtains a permanent residential address.

APPLYING FOR PARTICIPATION

Victims complete an application packet for participation in the ACP through their local domestic violence programs. The completed application packet is then forwarded to the ACP in Richmond, Virginia, for review and certification.

CERTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATION

Each certified participant is assigned a unique authorization code number and is issued an ACP authorization card. The ACP authorization card includes the participant's name, signature, birth date, authorization code, and substitute address. Once a participant receives the ACP authorization card, he or she can begin using the ACP substitute address.

THE ACP SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS

The substitute address has no relation to a participant's actual location. All ACP participants are authorized to use the same post office box (P.O. Box 1133), which is the ACP's post office box located in Richmond. Each participant must use his or her unique authorization code number as part of the substitute address.

MAIL FORWARDING SERVICE

Once a participant begins using the substitute address, the participant's mail will be forwarded to the ACP P.O. Box in Richmond. The ACP receives, sorts, repackages, and forwards all **first class mail** to each participant's actual residential address. The ACP does not forward magazines, catalogs, or "junk" mail. The mail forwarding service does delay the participant's receipt of his or her mail; however, every effort is made to forward the mail as promptly as possible.

SERVICE OF LEGAL PROCESS

The Attorney General acts as the agent for service of process for any legal papers directed to an ACP participant. Once service is received by the Attorney General on behalf of the participant, the participant is immediately notified by the ACP, and the legal papers are immediately forwarded to the participant.

To apply for participation in the ACP, contact the local domestic violence program in your area.

To locate a program near you, call the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline, 1-800-838-8238.